

History of Marlinton

In 1751 General Andrew Lewis and Captain John Stuart came to Marlins Bottom and found Jacob Marlin and Stephen Seivell living here without families. Marlin and Seivell were of the Daniel Boone type who did not bother to take title to the land upon which they lived. So Lewis had the first go at surveying the land at this place and claiming it as his own grant. This survey was respected and the settlers who came in settled up Price Run or Stony Creek. But it is on the Lewis survey that most of the town of Marlinton is built, on the oldest and best title in West Virginia. The stump of the old corner oak marked by Lewis is still standing. This is the oldest land mark east of the Mississippi River.

Be it known that under the Albany treaty of 1722, white people had no right to survey on the western waters—that is Mississippi drainage—in 1751.

However, Lewis and others had a plan to colonize the Greenbrier Valley under the name of the Greenbrier Company, and this company fooled the King and Council into believing the Greenbrier flowed into the James River. Under this pretense, a charter was given to take up for settlement a hundred thousand acres of land in the Greenbrier country.

Now the question naturally arises why did not Andrew Lewis go further and include in his survey the fine bottom lands of the Fair Ground and adjoining farms. It is believed that Jacob Marlin laid claim to that part of the bottom for his own. The only basis for this belief is that twenty-five years later Lawrence Drinnon had his fort on the present Fair Grounds and his wife was Sallie, a daughter of Jacob Marlin.

As soon as Lewis and others began to survey out land on the Greenbrier River, the Indians through the Long House of the Six Nations began to send word to London about the violation of the treaty of 1722. Orders of the King and Council did not keep the Scotch-Irish back; they merely left their surveying tools at home. We know that Jacob Warwick's mother, Elizabeth Dunlap Sitlington, was living at Marlinton in 1765. They wrote a letter back to the folk in Ireland. The letter was from Greenbrier. The king got suspicious of the description of the land that lay north and west of Cowpasture River. According to his views it should have been limited to the Allegheny Mountains for its western boundary.

In the meantime settlers who had come in here had stirred up trouble with the Indians and started the French and Indian War. After they had killed Braddock, the Indians

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Raided Marlins Bottom and killed and captured 18 persons. This was August 12, 1755.

Lewis had been here in a kind of fort called Fort Greenbrier just before and after Braddock's defeat, but he had taken some Indian prisoners at this place and marched them to Fort Dinwiddie on the eastern side of the Allegheny.

Finally four years after Virginia had become an independent state and called herself the Commonwealth of Virginia, Lewis got his deed. Thomas Jefferson, Governor, reciting that Lewis had made composition with the commonwealth by the paying of two shillings, he was given a grant or deed for 480 acres of land at the mouth of Weings(knob) Creek by virtue of a survey made Oct. 11, 1751. This deed was given June 2, 1780. The Revolution had been about won by that time. The general's delay in proving up his land claims can easily be accounted for by the fact that he was busy with the affairs of the French and Indian War and he had been detained as a prisoner of war in Canada.

He came back from Canada in broken health in 1780, leaving a will by which he gave the 480 acres at Marlins Bottom to his son John Lewis. John Lewis died the next year leaving the land to four of his children, Charles, Samuel, Andrew and Eliza. They in turn sold it to Jacob Warwick and Warwick signed the title bond to William Poage Jr. as a marriage portion. Poage was a Major in the war of 1812. He was one of the charter members of the court that formed Pocahontas County, and was sheriff of the county. He died in 1827 leaving the land to two of his children, Woods Poage and Margaret Poage (Mrs. James A. Price).

The next move in title was that Woods Poage sold his half of the land to his brother-in-law James A. Price, this gave the Prices 2,211 acres in and around Marlins Bottom. Later James Price sold the Woods Poage farm to Dr. George B. Moffett, who in turn sold one half of it to Hugh McLaughlin. When the town site was proposed in 1891 as the last of the Virginia Boom towns, the title was in the names of the following persons: William H. McClintic, William J. McLaughlin, A. M. McLaughlin, Samuel D. Price, William T. Price, James H. Price and Levi Gay.

These were all farms. There were no commercial activities whatever. Huntersville was town. Buckeye and Edray were the nearest stores.

From:--1928 Blue Book by Andrew Price

From:--Pocahontas Times--Dec. 24, 1936

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In December of 1890 an epoch making snow fell, making it the winter of the big snow. While it lay on the ground to the depth of three feet or more, Colonel John T. McGraw of Grafton made a visit to this county and purchased the farms known as Marlins Bottom for a town site. The name of the postoffice had been changed in 1887 from Marlins Bottom to Marlinton. Mrs. Janie B. Skyles, a Maryland lady, was instrumental in bringing about the change. She objected to the word Bottom as not being a nice word. The old timers were horrified when they found the name had been changed, but the harm had been done and all appeal to congress failed to undo the harm. Mr. Skyles soon afterwards moved away but she left us christened with a new name.

The purchase of the town site by Colonel McGraw was the first intimation that the people had of the proposed railway developments. The plan was that the Camden System of railroads was to extend up Williams River, across the divide at the head of Stony Creek and to Marlinton. It was a part of the plan that the Chesapeake and Ohio would build an extension from Hot Springs to Marlinton to connect with the Camden. The railroad was not built at that time because of a money panic which came to the county. Colonel McGraw, who had invested largely in lands elsewhere in the county, never ceased to try to interest capitalists in this county and develop it with a railroad. His attention was called to the natural route for a railroad up Greenbrier River. He had a survey made from Marlinton to Roncevert at a cost of \$10,000, and it was on this location that the railroad was afterwards begun in 1899 and finished in 1901.

The town of Marlinton was laid off in town lots in 1891, and widely advertised as a place where a town could be built. The Pocahontas Development Company was chartered and took a deed for 640 acres on which the town was to be built. They put valuable improvement on it. An offer of \$5,000 to be applied on a new courthouse was made, if the people of the county would change the county seat from Huntersville to Marlinton. The election held in the fall of 1891 gave the county seat to Marlinton. At that time Marlinton had a population of about 100 people.

Marlinton began to improve as soon as the railroad was completed. It was incorporated at the April Term of Court, 1900, and held its first election on May 5, 1900.